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The Jewish Dog and *Shehitah*

Abstract

The essential clash between Judaism and Christianity, especially Catholic Christianity, has been over purity and contamination, in particular, by touch. The anxiety is biblically derived. It pertains especially to consuming meat and is amplified by the biophilic ‘affiliation’ of humans with animals. The current debate over kosher and halal slaughtering carries over these anxieties. That debate is exemplified in the article by the prohibition of Christian butchers purchasing and selling non-kosher quarters of meat in the early eighteenth century Roman Ghetto and the fight against this prohibition waged by Rabbi Tranquillo Corcos.

The Temple, says the Lord, is my throne. It is my doing, my making. I will thus bring my attention to the poor and lame of spirit, and to the one who is punctilious in fulfilling my command. (But he who performs rituals outside the Temple will come to bad recompense.) To slaughter an ox will be to murder a man; to sacrifice (*zoveah*) a lamb to behead a dog; to bring a grain offering (*minhah*) to bring the blood of a pig; to offer incense to bless a void. (Isa. 66)

1. Gordon 204. This translation, as opposed to the now standard one of the Jewish Publication Society, properly emphasizes the transformations that are central to this essay’s arguments. Cf. the JPS version: “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; He that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he broke a dog’s neck; He that offereth a meal-offering, as if he offered swine’s blood.” I have removed the “as if,” which I do not see in the original, my enormous regard for the JPS translators notwithstanding.

שׁוֹחֵט הַשּׁוֹר מִכֶּה-אִישׁ, זֹבֵחַ הַפֶּסַח עֵרֵף כָּלֵב,
מַעֲלֵה מִנְחָה דָם-תְּחִיר

I see rather direct equivalences through the absence of a linking word/verb.

The translation is mine, aided by the critical commentary of Sh. L. Gordon in parentheses.¹ The subject is proper sacrifice, but also improper, based on the propriety of the offerant and the offering of the sacrifice, which must take place in the Jerusalem Temple of the Lord alone, where, by implication, all will gather. The prophet goes on:

To those who have chosen these (evil) ways, to follow in their hearts abominations, I shall bring tribulation. I called, and they did not answer. I spoke, and they failed to hear. They did evil, and elected to do what I spurned. (Again, my translation/paraphrase.)

Recompense for improper sacrifice thus was immediate: a pure ani-

2. See Stow, *Jewish Dogs*, especially on Chrysostom in detail.

3. One sees precisely this interchange in Virgulti, chapter 9, who writes (I paraphrase): food discrimination was also established to keep Jews from gentiles. The pig reminds us of carnal people. But once the carnal law (the law of the carnal Jews, as opposed to the spiritual Christians, as emphasized by Augustine) was voided and replaced by the spiritual one (of Christianity), all the significations changed. It is nature that makes animals like the pig and lamb what they are. [...]. Besides, Christ wanted men to realize God created all things, including the pig. What makes man impure is not what goes in, but what comes out of the mouth. I return to Virgulti below.

4. ASCER, 1Sf, 1 inf. 7, fasc. 01, but also, and esp. 1Qa, 1 inf. 1, fasc. 06, for the text.

mal transformed into an abominable other – and the determination to prevent this scenario’s realization was profound. Laws, practices, and, especially, opinion, all oozing anxiety, leave no doubt. The anxiety was particularly great with respect to Jewish ritual slaughter, *shehitah*, and the meat, both kosher and non-kosher, that this slaughter generates. Forceful reservations about this meat and its consumption, we shall see, are also bound up with the image of the Jew as a dog, an image first seen in the writings of John Chrysostom, who wrote that the Jews were once “the [pure] children,” but now they are [impure] “dogs,” while the Christians who were once dogs are now God’s children.² Indeed, the constant sub-theme of this essay is anxiety about the substitution of the impure for the pure, alongside the affects of the interchange, frequent in our thinking, of humans for animals, animals for humans.³

I begin by focusing on an incident – the real, beneath which lurks the theoretical – that occurred in the eighteenth century, or about two millennia after Isaiah wrote. The resonance of Isaiah’s challenge was long-reaching. It persists, as we shall see, even unto today.

I confess that I am about to violate the normal rule that limits a paper to a specific issue set in a specific time and place, just as in this essay far more questions will be raised than answered, avenues to be explored opened, but not closed. Admittedly, this paper will also be speculative. Yet speculation, like the reiteration of dry fact, has its place in historical writing, as long, that is, as readers are let in on the ‘secret,’ and the author does not delude him or herself about what he or she is doing. Yet minus speculation, through retreat to safe positions, doors that can be – and should be – opened will remain regrettably closed.

I turn to the early eighteenth century, to the year 1723, when the noted Roman Rabbi, Tranquillo Corcos, wrote a detailed protest to papal authorities. The subject was the sale of meat.⁴ This was not the first time Corcos had represented Roman Jewry; Corcos’s centrality in communal affairs was overwhelming.

In 1705, Corcos composed a brief defending Jews charged with strangling a Jewish child in Viterbo. The usual ingredients were there, and Corcos responded in kind, not only by denial, but with claims that Jews loved Christians (he cites Abner of Burgos), for instance, by drinking Gentile wine in friendship (he cites both Buxtorfs, elder and younger, and Leon Modena). He deflects Maimonides on the passage *hatov shebagoyim harog* (kill even the best of the Goyim), and

he sustains Catholic monotheism staunchly, while calling Luther and Calvin heretics. In addition, Corcos composed a brief on why Jews attending forced sermons in Rome should not be being poked with a verger (while digesting their Sabbath *hamim*), citing Quintilian and Suetonius; he also refers to Origen and Tertullian. He wrote about Jews following their law, the *halakhah*, on inheritances, not the Hebrew Bible, as some legal experts in his day were insisting; and he defended the contents of *mezuzot* and *tefilin* as not superstitious, or idolatrous. He has read Raynaldus, the great sixteenth-century Church historian. He was at home in the ideas of Divine, Natural, and Human law, and he cites the seventeenth century jurist Pignatelli on blood libels, conversant as he was with *ius commune* and canon law, the legal foundations of the Papal State. In other words, he knew Christian tradition and teaching intimately. I highlight Corcos's polyglot citing of Christian sources that paralleled his awareness of rabbinics (not the forbidden Talmud itself); although he probably read Jacob ben Asher's *Tur* and Maimonides *Yad* directly; citing Buxtorf for safety.⁵

5. That is ben Asher's Arba'ah turim and Maimonides' Mishneh Torah. On Corcos and his works in general, see Berliner, vol. 2, part 2, 69–81; and also Sermoneta 70–72, Hebrew section. The old *Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Tranquillo Corcos" has an excellent summary, and, of course, original texts (or their copies) may be seen in ASCER.

From the late 1690s and the early 1700s, Corcos was one of Rome's three leading rabbis, prominent in the council of Sixty, the deliberative body of the Roman Jewish Community, and de facto permanent head of the Talmud Torah confraternity. On various occasions, he served as a *fattore* (*memune*), one of three heads of the Community, elected on a revolving basis. He died at about age 70 in 1730. Corcos, as seen in the late Yosef Sermoneta's essay on the *Academy* Corcos founded, was perhaps the foremost, although not Rome's only scholar during the later ghetto period; studies in this academy emphasized dialectic and literary skills. Corcos's family belonged to the ghetto's upper class, taking advantage of new papal initiatives in Civitavecchia and importing spices, although it was not a major player like the Barraffaele or Pepe. Untypically, I believe, for Roman Jews, Corcos's sons married out, meaning Jewish sisters from Siena. His focus, though, was the Roman ghetto, including the brief he wrote contributing to negotiations about reducing the ghetto's dimensions in order to eliminate rents due on unoccupied apartments.

Corcos's appeal in 1723 was against a recent attempt to prohibit the sale to non-Jewish butchers of the non-kosher hindquarters of ritually slaughtered (kosher) animals – cuts of meat Jews would not eat – for resale to Christian clients: actually, partnerships between Jewish and Christian butchers, as will become clear; I reserve the details of the appeal for later. But why, of all things, did such a prohibi-

tion, which makes no logical sense, exist? Why slaughter and then waste half an animal? Is that not a mockery of attempting to slaughter in a humane fashion, or at least an attempt not just to kill and then dispose?

Seen in a vacuum, it certainly would be. However, the question of meat and its consumption (in fact, the consumption of all food handled by Jews) had raised hackles since Christianity's start.⁶ It was there already in Paul, in 1 Corinthians 1.16–21, where one cannot fail to see a mirror image of Isaiah 66:

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf. Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

The sacrifices to demons are the same as the false sacrifices offered outside the unifying Temple and spoken of by Isaiah that transmogrify into the dog, pig, and murdered human. Sacrifices themselves, moreover, as already Leviticus prescribes, must be pure, but, so too, must be the one offering them, who must consume them in purity (Lev. 7.15; 19.6; 22.30; Smith 277–89). To this we add Paul's warnings about giving in to one's carnal nature, the very carnality Christian tradition from the time of Augustine, in particular, attaches to the Jews. This is the same carnality about which Paul warns in 1 Cor. 6.15–19, against associating the body of Christ (in effect, any Christian, especially one who has taken the Eucharist) with the harlot, and the 'loose livers' with whom it is forbidden 'to dine' (1 Cor. 5.11). Ezekiel 44.7, no doubt under Isaiah's (tritero-Isaiah's) direct influence, had put it succinctly, warning against the introduction into the Temple of aliens, the uncircumcised of heart and flesh, "who pollute my house by offering the sacrifice, my bread, which is the fat and the blood; their abominations violate my covenant." The bread was that which Paul had spoken of as the "one loaf," which was all Christians,

6. The point here is that all food handled by Jews potentially contaminates, to wit, the bull *Cum nimis absurdum* of 1555, which prohibits Jews commerce in comestibles; and see Freidenreich, *passim*.

7. On Cyprian and *lapsi*, see Cyprian, “De lapsis,” treatise 3.15; English trans. in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, [online](#), and the discussion in Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 11–15, as well as pages 137–45, for Jewish responses.

8. Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 20–21 on *omnes* and *Christianorum ad aras* (with precise citations); also Stow, *Anna and Tranquillo*, 102.

9. On Victorinus and Burchard, see Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 14 and 17, as well as the citations of texts in Linder, nos. 544, 569, 576, 597, and 1163, including *Christianorum ad aras*.

10. An Iraqi woman in Israel told me that this practice was still in force in Shiite ruled areas, at least during her own youth in Iraq. She was not allowed physically to enter a grocery store, lest she touch the food and contaminate it. Rather, she passed the order in, the food was given her, and she passed in the money. The same problem of impurity created by contact exists with respect to ‘over familiarity’ (as it was termed) of any kind, especially sexual. These are the same affects spoken of by students of biophilia; see below.

11. Blumenkranz 50 n. 30 bis for Caesar of Arles. Even Augustine accuses Jews of corruption and magic. In each case, the point is that contact with Jews pollutes, the “venin mortal.”

12. On Matthew Henry, see Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 4 and 210 n. 15, referring to Henry [online](#); on Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica*, chap. 27, see also Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 17 and 155–56; I cite this book on various occasions for convenience; the book is both available and contains additional citations of the authors cited here, as well as many others.

united in Christ. The portrait was completed by Cyprian who spoke out against those priests who would avoid persecution by offering pagan sacrifice, then to return to officiate at a Christian altar, contaminating “the bread” and, in turn, contaminating all those who accepted the Eucharist from them, whom Cyprian terms *lapsi*.⁷ These priests, to follow Isaiah, had converted the bread, Christ himself, into dogs and pigs, animals whose sacrifice had been prohibited as far back as the Hittites.

Admonitions to preserve purity were converted into legislation. The canon *omnes* prohibits mixed dining on the grounds that it makes Jews look superior to Christians. Gathering all these points into one pithy rule, the Roman law *Christianorum ad aras* of the fourth century – which reveals how endemic these matters were to western Christian society – forbade Christians to participate in pagan and Jewish rites.⁸ Thus one did not dine with Jews. So said Victorinus Africanus in the second century, Chrysostom, in the fourth, and Burchard of Worms, in the tenth, who called on violators to cleanse themselves through fasting.⁹ To dine with the Jew, to share the Jew’s food, any food, was contaminating, evoking the punishments Isaiah promises. Maurice Kriegel has written of the idea that even the touch of food by a Jew might pollute, a rule enforced in later medieval Provence.¹⁰

The contamination was fatal; Cesar of Arles likened consuming Jewish food to ingesting poison.¹¹ Through the consumption of this tainted meat, one acquired not only the impurity of the animal’s flesh, but also the impurities inherent in the animal, if one did not (shades of Chrysostom’s Jewish dog!) become literally the animal itself. To eat Jewish meat endangered the Christian’s salvation, and not only that of the individual. In Cyprianic terms, the impurity of one was passed on to all, menacing the entire Christian corporate body. This, moreover, was the meat of the same Jews whom – to bring us back to the eighteenth century – the English Divine Matthew Henry, a contemporary of Corcos, (once more) called dogs. It was also meat that Buxtorf said Jews had their children piss on before putting it up for sale, adding active, to an already existent intrinsic contamination.¹²

Capistrano

Yet, ignoring the rules, buying and consuming non-kosher parts of

kosherly slaughtered animals is precisely what Christians habitually did. There were even those who defended the practice, like the noted fifteenth century legist Angelo di Castro as he faced a situation similar to that with which Corcos would have to contend centuries later. Possibly in Jewish employ – he would be neither the first nor the last *ius commune* legist the Jews hired – di Castro wrote to defend the sale of hindquarters. He also evoked a sharp response from the noted Franciscan Giovanni di Capistrano.

Di Castro was well aware of the rules prohibiting the purchase of Jewish meat, as well as prohibitions on partaking Jewish foods, especially Passover matzah. He also knew of Paul's warnings in Galatians about giving in to one's carnal self. Still, he insisted that to refrain from buying and consuming Jewish meat is *ridiculum*, "nonsense; [...] in fact, it is to Judaize and sin" (*sic Iudaizare et peccare*). He was privileging that aspect of Pauline teaching where, as di Castro put it, did not "the Apostle say that Christians should not discriminate concerning food?" Possibly, di Castro was thinking of (the hopeful side of) Galatians 5.1–24: "[...] if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law [...] those who belong to Christ have crucified the lower nature with its passions and desires."¹³

This verse may easily be read as a mandate to end discrimination about anything one ate. In other words, if the Christian were to deny the carnal and raise the spiritual to the sublime, this-worldly things would be meaningless, a sign of which would be to eat Jewish meat. To think to the contrary, that refraining from its consumption guaranteed purity was to acknowledge that one was still bound to his (or her) carnal nature, hence, that Christians who discriminated were placing themselves under a law no less binding than that of the Jews. Refraining meant to corrupt the physical body in a way that traduced man's higher, spiritual nature. We might say that di Castro was accusing normative Christian practice of adhering to what eventually Ludwig Feuerbach would call a Jewish "alimentary (materialistic) theology," whose meaning – carnality as central – is much as Luther accused the pope of being Esau. It also traduced the Augustinian duality of carnal Jews and Judaism standing opposed to a spiritual Christianity and Christians.¹⁴

This was a good argument, but it ignores the Pauline contradiction (of 1 Cor. 6.16–17) that to unite with a harlot makes the one who does so a carnal being; propriety lay in spiritual union alone with Christ.¹⁵ And apparently, this is what the Franciscan Giovanni di Capistrano understood, who responded passionately to di Castro,

13. Again Stow, *Jewish Dogs*, 153–55, and 279 nn. 62 and 63, for Di Castro's text, alongside Capistrano's response, which are both presented by Angiolini.

14. Feuerbach is cited extensively in Bland 25; see, too, Stow, *Jewish Dogs*, 53–54. On Augustine, see Gonzalez Salinero 81–104, esp. 94, which cites an epistle of Jerome.

15. "Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit."

although his terms were traditional, as he fell back unreflectively on traditional canonical prohibitions. If, he wrote, “Jews consider the meats we handle as filthy, why should Christians eat the meat the criminal and putrid hands of Jews and other infidels treat as refuse.” We become their inferiors, Capistrano continued, and as though their slaves (subverting the Pauline order in which Jews were always subservient).

Capistrano had misconstrued di Castro’s argument. It was precisely by eating Jewish meat, di Castro was saying, “that one becomes superior” (*fatiendo non facit se inferiorem Iudeo, sed maiorem potius*) and free – declaring him or herself to be rid of the carnal law – to seek salvation in the realm of the spirit alone. Ultimately, however, it was easier for Capistrano to impugn Jewish carnality and the Jews’ alleged attempt to gain superiority rather than to confront Christian ‘carnality:’ the truth that di Castro’s argument had unmasked. It was easier to resort to what Gerhard Ladner named the *iudicio alienum* (the judgment of the other) that was so typical of the Middle Ages, to wit, to judge and impugn Jews, rather than judge one’s-self (Ladner 233–59). It was this same projection onto Jews of Christian ‘carnality’ and the fear of its effects that led Innocent III in his 1208 letter to the Count of Nevers to lump together laments about the meat Jews sold to Christians with anger at the rancid wine he said Jews were selling to Christians.¹⁶ Innocent, it is important to note, was apprehensive that the wine deemed unholy might end up in the communion chalice; it was actually the marc, which Innocent seems (erroneously) to have associated with the dregs (not the high quality sticks used for making grappa). Innocent’s additional condemnation of Jewish women buying the choicest milk fits this pattern, too. Pope Innocent may, however, have been most taken with an argument that Giovanni di Capistrano missed: namely, that sharing the food of Jews was degrading – an argument that the jurist Antonio Ricciulo was still repeating in the seventeenth century – to say that when Jews and Christians sit at a common table, deceit and corruption follow. Conviviality of all kinds when food or drink were involved was anathema.¹⁷

16. Innocent’s letter is cited in Grayzel, vol. 1, n. 24.

17. Antonio Ricciulo, chapter 46: “Ad tollendam quantum fieri potest occasionem familiaritatis inter christianos et iudaeos et ut iudaei in debitis obsequiis conteneantur, Pius IV provide constituit ut ipsi sola arte stracciarum seu cienciarum contenti aliquam mercaturam frumenti vel ordeï aut aliarum rerum usui quotidiano necessarium facere nequeant. [...] Contrahitur enim in convivii magna familiaritas et facilius quis inter epulas decipitur.” (So, there was to be no mixed dining.)

Biophilia

Yet something is missing in this picture. Though I have referred to the interchangeability of the terms animal, human, spiritual, and carnal, the terms of the argument have been essentially metaphorical, albeit

in the Pauline belief system and the Pauline construction of the world and salvation, these metaphors and the fear of contamination can be exceedingly powerful. Yet to my mind, they are insufficiently powerful to get us to the verge of the near hysteria visible in rants like that of Giovanni di Capistrano about not consuming meat the Jews refuse, meat that comes from an animal the Jews themselves consider clean, and, furthermore, whose hindquarters could be made kosher by removing the sciatic nerve. We need something more concrete, or at least a mental process that reifies the metaphorical.

Let us turn to the story told by Marjorie Agosín, of a game where children encircle one of their mates and chant questioningly *Quien robò el pane del horno* (“who has stolen the bread from the oven”), to which they respond *El perro judío* (“the Jewish dog”), which they then strike.¹⁸ This is patently a host libel. Yet the dog the children playing the game imagine (I am told this game is still played in Chile) is a real one, of flesh and blood, not a metaphoric stand-in for a Jew. Otherwise, the game makes no sense. Nonetheless, what has occurred here is an interchangeability. We see the reciprocity, the commensurability, of the human and the dog in at least potentially concrete terms.¹⁹

Let us suppose, then, that the dog attacking the Eucharist in this ‘game’ is perceived in the way people perceive and relate to dogs and other animals in reality. This supposition is not my convenient invention. The interaction of people and animals has been studied intensively by Edward O. Wilson and others under the name of biophilia. The founder of this field, Edward O. Wilson, is the world’s leading authority on the study of ants. But the study of biophilia is more than biology. It ranges into what looks like biological psychology or certainly anthropology. Biophilia, furthermore, and as I see it, has an historical dimension in that it seeks to relate the interactions it charts to real historical phenomena. And, beyond that, it makes use of the very texts brought in evidence above. Just as Isaiah pictures the wrongly sacrificed lamb as a beheaded dog, a specifically animal comparison, biophilia asks how one relates humans – and reciprocally, how humans are related – to other animals.

We must, of course, take care in borrowing from a field so definitionally distinct from the normal landscape of historical research. Some would see biophilia in strictly biological and non-anthropological, transactional, let alone historical terms. My own limited reading in this field leads me, as just indicated, to a different conclusion. Biophilia is a field from which historians may gingerly borrow, if only

18. Agosín’s mention of this game is found in Agosín and Sepúlveda 13. See also Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 3.

19. Recent discussions relating humans and animals, as well as Jews and animals, may be found in the work of Alexandra Cuffel, who, with great detail, emphasizes the polemical use of animal metaphors, especially to cast Jews as disgusting, or filthy. She mentions, too, impurity, but not in the terms in which the idea is cast here. She borrows from Epstein; and here, too, we note, Kogman-Appel, and the many essays in Burns and McCracken, where we see that interchangeability between humans and animals can be complex and not always pejorative.

20. Edward O. Wilson is also recognized a proponent of the much debated field of sociobiology, the study of the genetic basis of the social behavior of animals, including humans; see Wilson 249.

21. Houston 199. Jews have the extra problem in that the pig is tempting, since it is half-kosher, as Deut. 14 itself indicates in forbidding the animal. It has a cloven hoof, but does not ruminate, both of which are required.

22. Of course, it can go in the other direction, too, as one reads in the paper of David Shyovitz in this collection about Jews who say dogs are good; and I think of the dog who brings bread to San Roque.

23. Guillelmus Armoricus's writings are found in Bouquet 17:66; and for more on William, see Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 84–86.

because it is not as completely divorced as some would argue from non-biological human activity. Rather, anthropology, epistemology, and even history come into its ken. Thus Wilson, in his classic essay “Biophilia and the Conservation Ethic,” speaks of nature that is “mediated by rules of prepared and counter prepared *learning* – the tendency to learn or to resist learning certain responses.” “Biophilia,” he continues, “is a complex of learning rules and feelings molded (by these rules) from attraction to aversion and [...] anxiety.” Yet biophilia is also, if not predominantly, “the innately emotional *affiliation* of human beings to other living *organisms*. Innate means hereditary and hence part of ultimate human nature.”²⁰ In other words, what one generation does, a later one will, too – and vice versa. This means that what becomes an affect carries on, neither simply, but going beyond what is *learned*.

In a collection of essays, edited by Wilson and Stephen Kellert, Kellert writes that this kind of interaction extends to inanimate nature, not only animals. Affiliation means true identification, true interchangeability of characteristics between human and animal, but also between animals and humans, each one possessing the qualities of the other, *as though* the possession were real, if not *truly* real. In this same volume, Walter Houston carries these perceptions back to the Ancient Near East – my point of (Hittite) departure, where, as a whole, dogs and pigs pollute and are not used sacrificially. Even later Christians describe the pig negatively.²¹ The dog or pig, Houston writes, is the enemy, the animal a model of human degradation.²² The dog especially symbolizes impurity. As Houston describes it, the dog is also the animal on which people take out their rage. Yet, extrapolating from Houston, what if that rage is anagogically and allegorically transferred to humans, attributing them with canine qualities?

This, writes Aviva Cantor, in another context, is what the Nazi's did, who made laws protecting animals, but then transferred the anger that is so commonly taken out on dogs and similar household animals to Jews (Cantor 95–113). That transfer would occur also with the meat the ‘other’ ate, but also the meat the other would *not* eat. Impure and inferior become identical – think of the aforementioned canon *omnes*; but think, too, of the chronicler William the Breton, who writes that Philip Augustus believed the Jews “sacrificed and consumed” the heart of a Christian child.²³ The fear for – and of – the Eucharist and its powers, since it is that which is imagined here, has been transferred onto the Jew, a fear that is perhaps most obvious in host libels. For these libels bespeak both reversal and counter-

transference: to wit, blaming the other for corruption, when it is really the one levelling the blame who is corrupt. Here again, one sees the ascription of failings or anxieties onto another, who is then accused of propagating these negative qualities him or herself.

In a biophilic context, the propensity for such predatory, animalistic behavior would be considered integral to Jewish nature, transmitted over the generations. Likewise, the tendency to perceive the Jew in this way would be reinforced by concepts of reciprocity. Paul Shepard writes that we relate emotions (read: anxieties) to animals; dove, spiritual, wolf, aggressive – pig and dog, filth (Shepard). The animals represent what is obscure to the conscious self. How easily, then, could, and was, the process reversed, with fears for Eucharistic purity tied to the filth of the Jewish dog?

In this world of human-animal interchange, moreover, the impure is balanced by the pure, for notable example, the purity associated with the bee. Bees, writes Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, are said to be endowed with wisdom and sensitivity, and they are sometimes viewed and treated as surrogates for the Holy Trinity, if not Christ himself (Atwood Lawrence). As a sign of veneration, only a person of physical and spiritual purity, dressed in clean clothing, may approach the hive. The bee is pictured as our better, if not perfected, selves; hence, bees are bestowed with human qualities and to be approached as such. The bee is also viewed as part of a community, reminding us of Paul's *unus panis*, a community in which all labor together for the *communis utilitas*, the *res publica*. Interlopers must be destroyed.

Those interlopers are the dogs, but also pigs, who, by contrast (to bees), Lawrence writes, are “repositories for our own fears of ourselves and the animal within us.” In this vein, Lynn White suggests that butchering pigs is symbolic of human mastery over nature,²⁴ an act which Lawrence, as Houston, describes as counter transference (Lawrence 301). She adds that the more vehement their feelings, the more surely do people articulate them in animal terms... (which she names) cognitive biophilia, and, in this context, she evokes Levi-Strauss, who views animals as symbolizing human desires. The Christ-like bee, living in the community of Christians, is purity, whereas the pig is foul, the product of wrongful sacrifice, as in Isaiah.

Such constructions are not novel. The legist and judge of the Jews in Turin in the early eighteenth century, Giuseppe Sessa suggests the famous Jewish odor may come from the onions (*coepis*) and garlic

24. Citing White, esp. 1205.

Jews eat or from their life style and sedentary work, which makes them sweat profusely (Sessa 130). No animal is mentioned, but – within the terms of biophilic thinking – the clear allusion to the filth of dogs and pigs, but also the incestuous dog, seems obvious. The ideological visualization of Jewish carnality and its threat to Christian purity blends, or at least is superimposed, over a structured perception of reality in the animal world.

Lorenzo Virgulti, a convert to Catholicism and an almost exact contemporary of Tranquillo Corcos, did not hold back. For him, Jews and pigs were transposable – serpents, too – a figure he also associated with blood and its consumption, or the Jewish total prohibition of doing this. The pig symbolizes as well Jewish carnality. The Jews, Virgulti insists, are gluttonous with permitted foods, which, he suggests, is to compensate for foods that are forbidden,²⁵ an idea that makes us wonder – for the sake of contrast – whether in the Jewish mind, pork consumption is a badge of impurity. Thus Jews and Christians debated each other ferociously about respective purity.²⁶ Through constant inversion of Christian motifs, Jews denominated themselves pure, Christians contaminated (by their idolatrous ritual). *Sefer Yosef HaMekaneh*, skillfully using a passage in Matthew, calls the Eucharist human waste.

25. Virgulti chap. 9, as in n. 3, above.

26. *Sefer Joseph HaMekaneh*. The struggle over purity is the overall theme of Stow, *Jewish Dogs*, stated explicitly on page 153.

Slaughter

I would like to transfer these biophilic ideas to the contemporary problem of animal slaughter, to ask whether in biophilic terms, the Jewish sale of non-kosher quarters of beef may become an existential threat in the sense of the poison referred to by Caesar of Arles. Through such sales did not the purportedly and innately animalistic Jew seek to corrupt Christian purity, an action that is commensurable with Augustine's admonition warning spiritual Christians to avoid carnal Jews?²⁷ What is more, because kosher or halal meat involves ritual (invoking Allah or a blessing that God has commanded us *lish-hot*), does this not make the non-Jew, in the spirit of Isaiah, a participant in stigmatized Jewish rites through the medium of the meat to be consumed?

There are further twists related to rage and its outlets. When the Nazis pressed those they ruled to transfer rage otherwise taken out on animals to humans and then to reify this transfer by likening humans to dogs and pigs, was it not consequential that the same peo-

27. The carnal Jews versus the spiritual Christian is the theme of Augustine's late tract *Adversus Judaeos*, available in various editions and translations.

ple (expressing, transferring, and projecting their rage) would find special fault with the way the object of their projection – now branded as a legitimate target of violence – treated animals? This includes with the way these ‘objects’ slaughtered living creatures for meat. In the same vein, might not Christians (like Capistrano) expressing rage see the attempt of the Jewish objects of their rage passing on to them (the Christians) what they themselves refuse (non-kosher meat, or even non-kosher cuts) as a modus of contamination? Might this attempt not also be seen as a ploy on the part of the Jewish objects of rage to incorporate the enraged Christians into their own (purportedly) filthy and contaminated animalistic communal body (the antithesis of the purportedly pure Christian one)?

Phrased in concrete terms, might not a fear of contamination lurk behind otherwise apparently justifiable attempts by modern bodies – notably various European nations, and especially those of the European Union – to protect animals about to be slaughtered for meat from cruelty? We must beware of labelling these initiatives ‘anti-Jewish’ or ‘anti-Semitic,’ undertaken deliberately to restrain Jews. But there is an underlying anxiety on the part of at least some of those seeking limitations, which – as the anxiety is expressed – connects the present questioning of Jewish and, now, Muslim slaughter to past (religious) teachings. We need but look at statements made with reference to the anti-*shehitah* laws that have existed and aroused Jewish displeasure in Sweden since 1937, laws that were renewed in 1988.²⁸ In the words of one of the commissioners in charge of implementing the 1937 law, he said:

In my opinion, one should [...] as far as possible, show consideration [for] the Mosaic believers [Jews] in the country [...] On the other hand, it is in my opinion obvious that the interest of avoiding a disruption in a numerically few citizens’ religious practices [...] cannot outweigh the ethical interest which is born by a heavy majority of the population and which demands that animals are protected against unnecessary suffering, as well as the interest of eliminating a method of slaughter that in wide circles is perceived as offensive and shocking.

Even more than “ethical interest,” then, it is the so-called “offensive and shocking” that motivates these laws’ proponents. I cannot unpack the meanings of “offensive and shocking” for Sweden, but a

28. See Hofverberg, who summarizes legislation from 1937 through 1988; the long citation is found on page 5. See also Alwall 157.

29. Mark Mullins on Nicky Cambell's *The Big Question*, April 29, 2012, titled: *Should Halal and Kosher Meat Be Labelled?* With respect to the question of stunning itself, opinions differ enormously, for instance, that of Rabbi Dr. Riccardo di Segni about to be mentioned in the text.

clear indication comes from a BBC program aired on April 29, 2012, featuring a live debate among about twenty participants. The debate does not distinguish halal from kosher (most of the time), nor is kashrut unintended collateral damage of a desire to repress Muslims. Nonetheless, in the clearest of tones, the noted barrister Mark Mullins, demands that all meat slaughtered without stunning should be plainly marked. However, what perturbs him, he says, is not humane slaughter, rather, that he does not wish to partake of meat blessed in the name of 'another God.' That he might do so, even unknowingly, is a source of fear.²⁹

To complicate the argument is the fact that the question of which mode of slaughter causes less suffering is fraught. Whether slaughtered by having its throat cut or by first having it rendered unconscious, animals are aware of impending trauma. Nor – in the words of Dr. Riccardo di Segni, the Chief Rabbi of Rome, but also a distinguished radiologist, hence, a physician of great experience, not a religious source alone – is stunning painless. Electroshock, he points out, is not always perfect; gas (used to slaughter pigs) creates enormous stress-damage to the respiratory system. A third method, a pistol with a retractable bullet, works most imperfectly. By contrast: "*shehitah* with a razor sharp blade, long enough to make the single cut, using no pressure whatsoever, guarantees minimal pain." It is much, di Segni says, like anesthesia, that the rapid loss of blood leads to an instant drop in pressure and unconsciousness. The studies that argue the advantage of stunning are not at all accurate.

At the same time, Di Segni (following Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of Britain) says that apart from all this – arguments raised to salve the conscience – *shehitah* is a ritual practiced for centuries. To ask Jews to give it up is tantamount to attacking Judaism itself. And he notes that the same forces attacking *shehitah* are those attacking circumcision (Di Segni 157–66). Di Segni thus has gone to the point that is our point. However one scientifically judges (or justifies) *shehitah*, it is outlooks like those in the BBC video, not supposedly humanitarian ones, that he perceives as determinate, and against which he defends by insisting on the right of Jews (and Muslims) to their mode of *shehitah*. We might say he is asking whether – and expressed in Pauline terms in the Epistle to the Romans (chapter 9) that "the elder shall serve the younger," *rav ya-avod tsa'ir* – the Jewish "body" is to be controlled (by laws in restraint of ritual slaughter) and thus made submissive to the Christian one – and, in the words of those like Mark Mullins, in order to preserve the latter from

defilement. To go one step further, is not the attempt to reign in Jewish *shehitah* akin (at least metaphorically) to reigning in what is perceived as a Jewish carnal sacrifice, an unwanted offering that may end up on the Christian table, polluting the diner and perhaps transferring to unwitting Christians, along with impurity, the Jewish (carnal) nature: thus to infect the bee-like purity of its Christian counterpart.

However preposterously, the Christian by eating *taref* becomes a part of the Jewish intestine. This is a true inversion if ever there was one, which is what gave/gives Christians their fears. And in this context, we should not neglect the insistence of the former pope Benedict XVI, who wanted the word Christian to be added to a proposed European constitution as defining that body's identity and nature. Likewise, in 1946, Pius XII demanded that the European states put marriage under exclusive Church supervision.³⁰

30. Pope Benedict's stance is well known. For Pius XII, see Stow, *Anna and Tranquillo* 83.

I would not speculate so boldly about the implications of laws in restraint of *shehitah* were it not for the decree of Pius VI in 1775, *Fra le pastorali sollecitudini*. This bull renews with a vengeance every piece of legislation intended to keep Jews and Christians separate. It prohibits Christian laundry women from removing clothes from the ghetto for cleansing – the ghetto water supply was insufficient – and it prohibits Christian carters from removing refuse, both of which had been common practice.³¹ Their absence, the Jews protested, would lead to plague throughout the city. Equally disturbing, licenses were no longer going to be given to Christian wet nurses; a profession, the Jews argued, that Jewish women did not practice, since they normally nursed their own (Stow, *Anna and Tranquillo* 97–98).

31. Water and the maintenance of its sources was of great concern, to wit, the ten page long contract made by Tranquillo Corcos, representing the Jewish Community, with two Christian plumbers to keep the water flowing, including emergency repairs to the fountains known as the Acqua Paola and Trevi; ASCER, 1Ta, 1 inf. 8, a single bound volume.

The core clauses of the bull were harsher yet, in which new rules were laid down legitimizing the virtual kidnapping of children in order to effect their baptism. Everything else in the text was ancillary to this goal. The bull had been originally formulated in 1733, then issued, but never fully carried out, in 1751. Now, from 1775, it would be rigorously enforced (Stow, *Anna and Tranquillo* 82, 97).

It should be no surprise that as part of the bull's attempt to repress Jewish life to the point that as many Jews as possible desert their religion – conversion, after all, being the ultimate strategy (by way of eliminating Jews entirely) for halting Jewish contamination – Christian butchers were ordered not to traffic in non-kosher portions of meat that had been slaughtered by *shehitah*. A Jewish protest of 1751, perhaps in response to the formulation of *Fra le pastorali* of that

32. ASCER, 1Sf, 1 inf. 7, fasc. 01, 1754, with marginal approval in pen in 1755.

33. ASCER, 1Tf, 2 inf. 2, fasc. 03, 1751. And there had been a previous attempt in 1723, which is when Corcos wrote his memorial.

34. *Minute Book of the Roman Jewish Community*, ASCER, for 1787, entry for 18 August.

35. Even more, both sides could see that the more civil law (*ius commune*) inserted the Jews into the regular mechanisms of the state, as it was indeed doing, the more untenable the contradiction became between civil privilege and canonical restriction. This was also incompatible with newer political ideas that were poised to question the idea of the confessional state and were redefining the nature of citizenship. Sooner or later, that contradiction would have to give way. The ghetto experience had demonstrated to both Jews and many Christians that the source of their, the Jews', problem was not repression, nor constantly applied conversionary pressure, but what that pressure symbolized, namely, the Jews' permanent exclusion from full membership in society. And just because of the Jews' 'civil absorption' kept widening as the state's operations modernized, that exclusion, based on confessional-spiritual priorities, was becoming ever more intolerable. The 1558 definition of Marquardus de Susannis focuses the issue. For de Susannis, in his *De Iudaeis*, full citizenship was acquired by *regeneration* in the baptismal font. Yet the modernizing state (I am highly syncopating) was more and more insistent on equal law for all, excluding religious criteria. The only, and obvious, way to eliminate this inherent contradiction was by reformulating the concept of 'regeneration' and giving it a civil definition; on which, see Stow, *Anna and Tranquillo*, *passim*.

year, had argued that the prohibitions on the sale of meat would make Jewish meat consumption virtually impossible. Kosher meat would become too expensive, precisely as Riccardo di Segni also points out, since only about 30% of the kosher slaughtered animal is eaten. Without the sale of the rest, prices would skyrocket.

And it seems that the 1751 protest prevailed. A text of 1754 presents, in Latin, a judicial decision favoring the Jewish petition.³² What happened in 1775, when *Fra le pastorali* was formally issued, I do not know. But I think one can make a good guess.³³ The Jewish Community's minute book for August 1787 reports that meat prices had gone way up, to the point that there was a black market that weighed heavily on the poor.³⁴

Corcos on Meat

Let us return to Tranquillo Corcos, who, we have said, had to deal with an earlier episode of the prohibition in 1723. Corcos was a contemporary of Lorenzo Virgulti, who likely knew Virgulti both before and after the latter converted, and who likely also knew Virgulti's words about Jews, pigs, and serpents; he certainly knew their spirit. However, it was the practical that Corcos emphasized, as he composed his appeal as part of his involvement in the so often frustrating daily operation of the community – an involvement that, as mentioned above, had on many occasions led him to invoke both *ius commune* and the canons (not only rabbinics or their Christian exponents) in defense of Jewish rights. The *ius commune*, he knew, denominated Jews *cives*, citizens with full *civil* rights; on this status Christian legists universally concurred. Discrimination was limited to religious matters.³⁵ And was not the sale of meat, in Rome, any meat, a purely civil, commercial process? In the event, Corcos now argued, recent developments challenged a long-existing status quo, regardless of Christian theology.

Jews, he wrote, had always been authorized to sell to non-kosher hindquarters to Christian butchers. They were, he went on, given license to do so as far back as the time of Sixtus V (5 October 1586), who personally authorized the practice. Moreover, Christian butchers have the advantage that they buy this meat without having to deal with the forequarters that the Jews take – an opinion Pope Sixtus apparently shared, who himself added that: "this is advantageous to

36. Corcos, ASCER, 1Qa, 1 inf. 1, fasc. o6, cited above, n. 4, cites Pope Sixtus V: “che non reca niun pregiudizio a Cristiani, anzi li torna in beneficio et utile: E similmente possino fare con Cristiani partiti et haver pratiche, familiarità, et amicizie con essi etc., valendosi delle mestieri, ufficii, esercitii, et manualità di Cristiani con pagare le loro oneste, e debiti mercedi, e particolarmente di Macellari Cristiani, quali siano tenuti dargli la Carne secondo si usa in Ancona, et altri luoghi al presso che pagano li Cristiani” (Corcos summarizes: “ma ancora ordino che fossero tenuti a dargli la carne, e che non potesso alterargli il prezzo di quello la vendono a Cristiani [...]”).

37. Various texts discuss the *polpina*, among which ASCER, 1Gb, 1 inf. 2, fasc. o3 and o8, “di valersi di essigere dui quatrini per libra, che l’assegnò per dote del Monte Sanità del Popolo Romano [in other words, it is a tax that the Jews collect to go to pay off debts]. Ni possino servire etiam di Macellari Cristiani.”

38. ASCER, 1Gb, 1 inf. 2, fasc. o3, and 1Gc 1 inf. 2, fasc. o2, “la concessione privative del Macello a due Macellari Cristiani,” 24 agosto, 1720. Also 1Sf, 1 inf. 7, fasc. o1.

the Christians, who can work with the Jews, even in *amicizie*” (he probably means ‘without frictions’). The price of the meat, moreover, was to remain equal for both Christians and Jews. Pope Sixtus’s bull, Corcos added, is recorded (and repeated) annually in the Statutes of the Butchers of Rome, chapter 18.³⁶

Sixtus V, Corcos continued, was echoed by Clement VIII, on 15 October 1595, who allowed the Jews to collect two *quatrini* a pound (a levy known as the *propina*), which the Jews would then reassign to the Monte Sanità; *monti* being the rough equivalents of today’s governmental bonds.³⁷ On 24 September 1613, Paul V confirmed these decrees, then Urban VIII, who added an additional *quatrino*, this time to pay off obligations to the Monte Sale, to be followed by Innocent X, on 7 September 1647, for debts to the Monte Annona. On 24 August 1720, Innocent XII assigned the *quatrini* to the Monte San Pietro, including a special license to two specifically designated Christian butchers.³⁸

Reality backed up both Corcos *and* the papal decrees. The new prohibition he was protesting threatened to upend a practice that had been formalized for generations. A series of documents from no later than 1660 regulates the activities of Christian butchers working hand in hand with Jewish ritual slaughterers (all denoted rabbis) both inside – and outside – the ghetto. The texts specify in great detail how the Rabbis do the slaughtering (*sciattare*; in Judeo-Roman, and used in papal texts as well), aided by Jewish *garzoni*, who purge the meat according to Jewish law. The butcher, always a Christian – we know many by name – did the heavy lifting, including removing the meat for sale to Christians from the ghetto; for instance, as one butcher explained, to his stall in the Campo di Fiore. Eventually, even the draconian legislation of Pius VI, which, as suggested, seems to have been put into practice for some time, gave way. Licenses to Christian butchers to set up shop in the ghetto in cooperation with the Jewish Community were being issued as late as 1837, whose texts repeat almost verbatim the same formula that appears in their mid-seventeenth century predecessors, including the price the slaughterer was to receive for each animal butchered (ASCER, 1Gb, 1 inf. 2, fasc. o8).

The crisis of 1723

As for the crisis that prompted the written protest of Tranquillo Corcos in 1723, it was provoked by the Cardinal Camerlengo, who, antic-

39. ASCER, 1Qa, 1 inf. 1, fasc. o6: “Ne può ostar una supposta prohibitione fatta dalla bona memoria del Signor Cardinal Spinola San Cesareo cammerlengo [...] che li quarti di dietro degli animali macellati per il Ghetto non si potessero portare ne macelli di fuori del ghetto, mentro può sentirsi da Monsgr. Illus.o e Rever.mo Marasoschi Uditore di Nostro Signore et a’ hora uditore di [the permit is so the Jews can pay back major debts to the Camera] detto eminentissimo cammerlengo, che subito che furono sentire l’allegate raggioni di detta Università fu rivotata detta prohibitione, come lo dimostra la continua pratica. Venendo hora preteso da Monsr. Ill.o e Rev.mo Presidente della Grascia di rimuovere questo inveterato stile, praticato per il corso di cento cinquanta e più anni roborato e coadiuvato da tante concessioni e Costituzione Apostoliche, e ultimamente risoluto dalla Sagra Congregazione del Sant’offitio per gl’ebrei di Ferrara li 15 luglio 1722 [to sell hind quarters. However, now, with the order of the Presidente, we cannot pay our debts to the Monte].”

40. ASCER, 1Qa, 1 inf. 1, fasc. o6: “che si v’è obligato di macellare l’agnelli e vaccini che bisogneranno per il Ghetto per il corrente anno, in conformità di un foglio concordato con Msagr. Il.mo Presidente, [...] havendo poi detto Msgr ristretto al deto Macellaro di non potersi portare detti quarti di dietro nel suo Macello, anzi obligatolo a dover aprir un macello vicini a Ponte quattro capi per vendenere solamente detti quarti di dietro [in the past, the butcher sold the meat] nel suo macello che tiene aperto in Campo di Fiore, come sempre si è praticato [now people do not have meat, including the sick]. Pietro Manieri Govr della Grascia si fece intendere che non poteva il medesimo in pregiudizio della RCA e della Dogana tener’ un macello aperto senza macellarci, oltre che l’istesso macellaro già si lagnava non poter resistere alla spesa che li portava [the butchery under these conditions].”

ipating, as it were, Pius VI, blocked Christian butchers from taking hind-quarters to butcheries outside the ghetto, but who then backed down when the Jewish Community reacted. Matters went back to normal – until, that is, the President of the Grascia, the powerful, clerical head of all matters concerning food, decided to put spokes in the wheels. He disregarded not only the Camerlengo, but also an act of the Holy Office in Ferrara from 15 July 1722, which assented to the transport of non-kosher meat to external butcheries. Corcos recounts this sequence of events in detail, as well as commenting that the decree of the President of the Grascia’s has made it impossible to pay (communal debts to) the *monti*.³⁹

This decree, he writes, has brought a complete halt to the slaughter and the consumption of meat. It has gone on for weeks, indeed, affecting the collections of the Apostolic Chamber, which supervises the *monti*. Absent the four *quatrini* assessment on each pound of meat sold, the Community, too, has suffered the loss of about 100 scudi in capital. When, moreover, through a partial compromise, a Christian butcher agreed to sell the non-kosher meat in a stall right outside the ghetto, not at his usual place of business in the Campo di Fiore (700 meters away), the expense became too great for him to continue, with the result that there is no meat in the ghetto, even for the ill and infirm.⁴⁰

Corcos submitted his petition on 23 May 1723, and we must assume that things were restored to the status quo ante. Indeed, Corcos represented the Roman Jewish Community’s application for a butchery license that was issued that very year (ASCER, 1GB, 1 inf. 2, fasc. o8). Calm had returned, but only until the next crisis, apparently that of 1751, to be followed by the long term trials in the wake of *Fra le pastorali*. There was clearly a seesaw of priorities, theology balanced against the pragmatic. For much of the time, the perspective of the late Paolo Prodi holds true. When faced with a choice between theology and the concrete good of the state, the latter took precedence (Prodi). Yet only up to a point. As the bull of 1775 testifies, with the Church believing itself to be ever more threatened by the forces of the Enlightenment and modernity, it was, as I have argued elsewhere, theology and the canons that reigned supreme (see Stow, *Anna and Tranquillo, passim*).

Pragmatic exigencies, specifically, the need for meat in the ghetto, did lead to a restoration of the old policy, as witnessed by the renewed butchery licenses of the 1830s; we do not know how long the deprivations of the late eighteenth century lasted, which were surely

overturned during the time of Napoleonic rule. Nonetheless, however much restrictions were eased, the advantages gained were overshadowed by a pyrrhic victory of theological drives. For it was by insisting on doctrinal supremacy that in 1858, and as he (mis)handled the Mortara case, Pius IX brought about the dissolution of the Papal State (Kertzer). This was the same Pius IX, who, in 1871, with the ghetto walls razed, commented that daily we see the Jews *latrare per le vie* (Stow, *Jewish Dogs* 50). The Jews were dogs; the ghetto itself had been a kennel. Jewish ‘over-familiarity,’ to use the term invoked by Antonio Ricciulo among many others,⁴¹ contaminated. Jewish meat, like the Jews themselves, contaminated absolutely (Grayzel 1989 22, 149).

41. Ricciulo, *Tractatus de iure personarum extra ecclesiae gremium existentium*; Chap XLVI: “Ad tollendam quantum fieri potest occasionem familiaritatis inter christianos et iudaeos.”

Which path the states of Europe will follow in the matter of *shehitah*, of the pragmatic one the early modern popes, or the theologically anchored one of the later eighteenth century pontiffs, we shall have to wait to see. Certainly from the Jewish perspective, and as made clear in the BBC debate, the path of marking meat slaughtered without stunning would be tantamount to declaring war on kosher slaughtering. On the possible underlying motives, the continuities, and potential anxieties, I hope this essay has shed some informative light.

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